

Saint Louis Audubon

Bulletin

• Volume 41, Number 5

April - May 1975

THIRD ANNUAL DINNER

On Friday, May 16, the Saint Louis Audubon Society will have its Third Annual Dinner, and again this year we will have an outstanding guest speaker, photographer-naturalist Len Robinson. For each Audubon dinner we have been fortunate in having an excellent program, starting in 1973 with our own Leonard Hall and continuing last year with Charles Callison, Executive Secretary of the National Audubon Society.

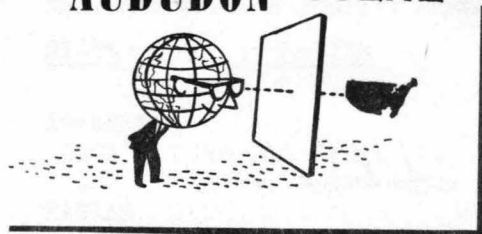
This year's speaker has an international reputation; Mr. Robinson comes to us from Melbourne, Australia. He is touring the United States under the auspices of the World Nature Association. In the past several years he has served as leader-naturalist for trips under the WNA sponsorship to Australia and New Guinea and has been a member of the scientific expeditions in the same areas.

In his work as a photographer Mr. Robinson has scored several "firsts" of birds or animals never previously photographed, and has published a book on Australian parrots. The program he will present here is entitled "Eastern Australia's Wildlife Heritage". Among a wide variety of pictures will be sequences on Fairy Penguins and Fairy Wrens, on Lyre Birds and Bower Birds, and on the magnificent coral formations of the Great Barrier Reef.

This year's dinner will be held in the Sesquicentennial Room of the Busch Memorial Center of St. Louis University. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m., with a cash bar starting at 6:00. The Sesquicentennial Room will accomodate many more people than previous locations, so guests are especially invited. For ticket information and directions see Bulletin insert.

New officers for the 1975-76 year will be elected at the dinner. A slate of candidates will be presented by the nominating committee. Additional nominations may be made from the floor.

THE AUDUBON SCENE



April 4, 1975

National Audubon Society has offered all Chapters a challenge and a real opportunity. Through the Whittell Estate Grant the opportunity has been presented whereby the Saint Louis Audubon Society can win \$2,000. Every Chapter in the nine Audubon Regions has a chance to win \$1,000 by showing the largest numerical increase and \$1,000 by showing the largest percentage increase between January 1 and June 30, 1975.

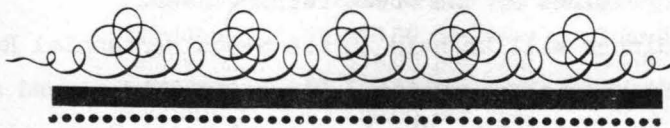
We are the largest Chapter in the West Central Region and while this may place us at a disadvantage on the percentage side, there is no reason why we cannot take both prizes for the Sanctuary Fund, youth education or some other conservation purposes. We lead all Chapters for the most new members since January 1, in the states of Arkansas, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Oklahoma. If each of us would sign up one new member, we could be the best in our Region. On the back page of this Bulletin you will find the membership drive results in the West Central Region through January 1975, and there is an application blank for your convenience. Please use it.

As my term as your President approaches its end, I would like to express my appreciation for the confidence of all the members and for the help and support of the Board. The past two years have gone quickly and while many gains have been made in conservation efforts, much more needs to be done to prevent complete encroachment and commercialization of every speck of our land heritage.

My hope is that you will continue your fine support by helping the new officers, board and Audubon efforts.

Sincerely,

J. Marshall Magner, President



SANCTUARY FUND CONTRIBUTIONS In Memory of Earl Hath

Mr. and Mrs. George C. Blaha
Mrs. Gerome Chambers
Mr. Dave Jones

Mrs. Earl Hath
Mr. and Mrs. Bud Robinson
Mr. and Mrs. Marion Spicer



Very Special

FOR A MINI-VACATION TO WARMUP FOR SUMMER FUN, sign up for the AUDUBON CAMP WYMAN WEEKEND OUTING & PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOP May 17 and 18, 1975. Camp Wyman is just 3 miles Northwest of Eureka, Missouri. Close enough to home to be easy on gasoline; far away enough to let you enjoy Nature's spring renewals in Elysian surroundings - and you can bring it all home on film!

Whether you are just a beginner or an accomplished photographer, there's a niche in the photography workshop just right for you. All phases of photography (basic, general, closeup, scenic, bird, other animal, insect, etc., and both color and black & white photography) will be covered by knowledgeable instructors who will conduct field trips from 1:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. May 17; and from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon on May 18.

Featured speaker after dinner on May 17 (dinner 6:00 p.m.) will be DR. LAWRENCE E. NIELSEN, Alaska Expeditionist, whose illustrated talk "GLACIERS, GOLD, AND ICE WORMS," follows the Alaska trail traveled by 19th Century gold prospectors. Following will be a novel musical presentation and a sing-along. Sunday noon's after dinner speaker will be Randolph O. Herberg, Area Manager of Rockwoods Reservation, with some fascinating wildlife observations and some tips on "Cheating to Photograph Wild Animals." He'll have live animals along to photograph and become acquainted with.

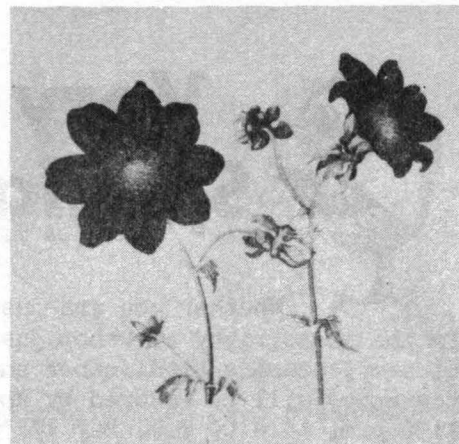
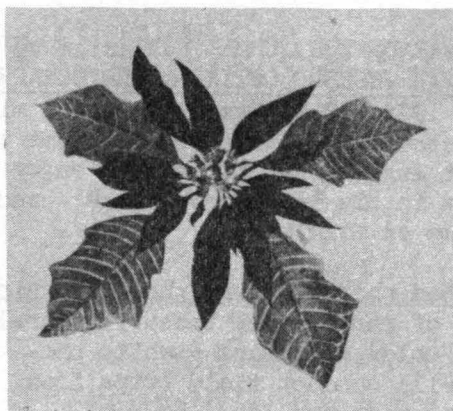
FOR THIS FULL WEEKEND OF NATURE ENJOYMENT; of learning by doing in photography, or just hiking with Audubon Naturalists; of good times with old friends and new friends; of hearing outstanding speakers; and of viewing an exhibit of photographs by Audubon Nature Photographers is just \$20.00 per adult and \$10.00 per child under 12 years of age. The weekend runs from 10:00 a.m. Saturday, May 17, through 4:00 p.m. Sunday, May 18, and includes SATURDAY EVENING DINNER; CABIN SPACE, LINEN, AND BEDDING FOR OVERNIGHT; SUNDAY BREAKFAST; SUNDAY NOON MEAL; AND A USEFUL INFORMATION PACKET. SEND RESERVATIONS TO MRS. GEROME CHAMBERS, 7024 FORSYTH, ST. LOUIS, MO. 63105. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO ST. LOUIS AUDUBON SOCIETY, AND INCLUDE YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND PHONE NUMBER. For additional information phone 427-6311. ACCOMMODATIONS ARE LIMITED. PLEASE MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY!

COLORADO TOUR. FOR YOUR TWO-WEEK SUMMER VACATION CONSIDER THE AUDUBON SOUTHWESTERN COLORADO PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR the two weeks of July 14 and July 21, 1975. Basing at Ouray (1200 miles west of St. Louis), Ed and Lee Mason will guide side trips: by jeep into YANKEE BOY BASIN (most abundant wildflower display in all the Rockies); by auto over Owl Creek Pass into Silver Jack Lake area; to Telluride by spectacular jeep trial and also round-about by auto; by jeep to Engineer Mountain for alpine flowers and ooh! views across summit after summit of the majestic San Juans; by auto along Dallas Divide for hikes into the great aspen forests; and other points. Jeeps and professional drivers will be hired to take us into the back-of-the-beyond and higher reaches. The tentative program includes a movie on plant and animal life of the area by film maker JOHN N. MERRILL; an illustrated lecture on "HOW AND WHERE TO TAKE PICTURES IN THE SAN JUANS," by Ouray's own Naturalist-Photographer MARVIN GREGORY; and an address by Publisher-Editor JOYCE JORGENSEN of the Ouray County Plaindealer. Mrs. Jorgensen was winner of last year's THE BIG HAT as Colorado's outstanding journalist. Each year since 1968 she and her newspaper have collected awards for excellence in photo-journalism, editorial content, community service, etc.

Allowing 2½ days driving time to Ouray and the same for the return, we'll schedule side trips and events beginning July 15 through July 23. Getting there and arranging lodging is up to you. DO MAKE YOUR LODGING RESERVATIONS SOON AS POSSIBLE - THE TOWN IS SMALL, ACCOMMODATIONS LIMITED! Include check for cost of one night's lodging when you make your reservation. We have a list of motels, apartments, cabins, trailer courts, camp areas. For this list, plus a packet of maps and area information, send a 9x12 inch envelope, with 20¢ in stamps affixed to it, to: COLORADO TRIP, 8410 MADELINE DRIVE, ST. LOUIS, MO. 63114.

WE ASSUME NO RESPONSIBILITY WHATSOEVER IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TOUR. WE DO INVITE YOU TO COME ALONG, AND HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US AND LET US SHOW YOU THE MANY SPLENDORS AND GRANDEUR OF COLORADO'S HIGH COUNTRY KNOWN AS "THE SWITZERLAND OF AMERICA."





FLOWERS OF MEXICO

For anyone who is familiar with the Climatron at Shaw's Garden, a trip to Mexico in November is like a visit to old friends. There, growing in the gardens of central Mexico, or in the wild in Chiapas, is that "delicious monster," the huge cut-leaf philodendron. It is also known as the fruit salad plant because of the large edible pistil, rather like that of our jack-in-the-pulpit or the calla lily. Over every garden wall in Cuernavaca hangs Bougainvillea in a beautiful array of what would ordinarily be considered clashing colors. Mixed with it are the yellows of Cup of Gold and the blues of Plumbago and Petrea. Reds appear primarily in the flowering trees, many of which grow in suitable areas throughout the tropical regions of the world. Especially beautiful are the African Tulip trees and the Erythras or Coral trees from southeast Asia. The Poinciana came originally from Madagascar but is so widely cultivated in the American tropics that it seems like a native.

November probably is the month of maximum bloom in Mexico. Rains from June to September, after the prolonged winter dry season, bring seemingly withered plants to glorious life again. This blossom climax in November would be equivalent to high summer in our blooming cycle.

Nowhere is this more apparent than on some of the roadsides. In many areas the wandering herds have nibbled everything in sight ("Cuidado con el ganado" — "careful with those cows" — is an all too familiar roadside sign). However, there are some sections the cattle haven't reached, and here the varied beauty of the flowers has the same impact as does the carpeted bloom on our western mountains. Many of the families are the same; lupines, poppies, penstemons, mints (especially red and blue salvias), mallows, vervains, and evening primroses are most noticeable.

One particularly interesting family is the convolvulaceae, the morning glories. These range from tiny red tubes, which the humming birds love, through the showy Heavenly Blues. Most surprising are the tree morning glories, which cover some of the hillsides around Cuernavaca with a white blanket in November. Humming birds and many of the western warblers which winter in Mexico haunt these. Flitting through one patch were the black-throated gray, hermit and Townsends.

When we consider the composite family we realize how many of our garden flowers first occurred in the wild in Mexico. North of Toluca many of the roadsides are pink with cosmos. Another flower which is pink in its wild state is the tree dahlia. It and its red cousins were the imperial flowers of Mexico at the time of Moctezuma, the pre-conquest Aztec emperor. The name, dahlia, illustrates how far a plant can sometimes get from its origin. Dahlias were introduced into Europe in 1789 and named shortly afterwards for Dr. Dahl, a Swedish pupil of Linnaeus. Perhaps the Mexican name, Cocoxochitl, was considered unpronounceable. Interest in the plant first centered around the possibility that the tubers might be edible — which they aren't! The zinnia is another native of Mexico, but it reaches the peak of its bloom during the early part of the rainy season.

The most usual color for composites everywhere, from the humble dandelion to the noble chrysanthemum, is yellow, and Mexico is no exception. Here, many of our small temperate zone herbaceous plants become trees. There is a tree groundsel (senecio) called Palo Loco (crazy stick) which gilds the lava beds around Mexico City in the spring. Sunflowers also become trees, especially the yellow and orange tithonias. Even up on the slopes of Mt. Popocatepetl at 14,000 feet there is a silver-leaved yellow daisy (eryngium proteaeflorum).

But a more humble composite, the marigold, is the universal flower of Mexico. There, All Souls Day, November 2nd, is celebrated as the Day of the Dead. The graveyards are filled with the yellow flowers, and tiny crosses made of the small wild growing varieties are placed on doors. The tiniest species grow persistently in the high pastures above the Lagos de Zempoala (Lakes of the Marigold) where even the all devouring goats are unable to discourage them. By the roadsides are larger single flowering species, both white and yellow, and in the gardens are various beautiful hybrids. Hybridization of marigolds, dahlias and other composites was an ancient practice, having started long before the Conquest.

To see orchids in Mexico one must either have an entree beyond those garden walls or knowledge of where to hunt among the fern and bromeliad laden trees of Vera Cruz and Chiapas. Actually, several hundred species of orchids occur all over Mexico, from the high mountains to the humid lowlands. Unlike most species in the States, which are terrestrial (rooted in the ground), tropical orchids are primarily epiphytic. They grow on the trees but take their sustenance from the air and rain water, not the plant hosts.

One large botanical group which in most cases seems dead and lifeless in November is the cactus family. As in our southwestern deserts, the height of their bloom coincides with the earliest rains in May. Cacti, along with the agaves (lily family), are the most characteristic plants of the dry areas of Mexico, growing in an amazing variety of sizes and shapes, always with thick, water-holding trunks and branches. The crassulaceae (or pines) have stems and leaves which also hold moisture. Our familiar sedums are members of this family. In Mexico they often sit (the name comes from the Latin, sedere — to sit) high up on canyon walls. One member of this group, the orange flowered Echeverria, reaches its peak bloom in November, growing as often on tiled roofs and walls as on its natural rocky ledges.

There is one last flower which is very special to Mexico. In the jungles of Chiapas it grows wild, higher than a man's head. In gardens it has been developed into many long flowering varieties. This is the Flor de Noche Buena, flower of the Holy Night — the poinsettia — the flower of Mexico's Christmas as well as ours. Long before diplomat Joel Poinsett sent seeds back to

Charleston in 1828 the Mexicans were cultivating it for its beauty and for its medicinal qualities. Apparently it was considered valuable as an aid to nursing mothers, and as a poultice and depilatory.

Its red "petals" are not petals at all, of course, but bracts around the little yellow flowers in the center, which explains why the apparent flowers are so long lasting. As far as its medicinal qualities are concerned, it is doubtful that anyone today would care to try them. But, Flor de Noche Buena or Poinsettia, it is a beautiful plant and one more symbol of the many things our two countries share.

Mary C. Wiese

TO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL BY MEMBERS AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Proposed Revisions to the By-Laws
of the St. Louis Audubon Society

ARTICLE III. BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1, 3rd sentence. Present version: The Board shall include the officers and twenty-four other persons, all of whom shall be members in good standing.

Proposed Revision: The Board shall include the officers and eighteen other persons, all of whom shall be members in good standing. The immediate past President shall be an ex officio Board member for one year after completing his term of office.

Section 1, 1st sentence in second paragraph. Present version: Directors shall serve three-year terms, except that of the members first elected, eight shall be elected to serve one year, eight for two years, and eight for three years.

Proposed Revision: Directors shall serve three-year terms, even though there may be more than eighteen Directors during the changeover from twenty-four to eighteen. Six Directors shall be elected each year at the annual members' meeting.

Section 3. Present version: Ten Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Directors' meeting.

Proposed Revision: Nine Directors shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any Directors' meeting. A Board member who accumulates three consecutive absences without valid reason shall be automatically dropped from the Board.

ARTICLE IV. OFFICERS

Section 1. Present version: The officers of the Society shall be a President; 1st, 2nd and 3rd Vice-Presidents, a Secretary and a Treasurer. They shall be elected at the annual meeting of members, and shall hold office for two years. An officer shall be eligible, if elected, to succeed himself in that office for an additional two-year term. In case of a vacancy occurring among the officers before the end of the year, the place shall be filled for the expiration of the term by the Board of Directors.

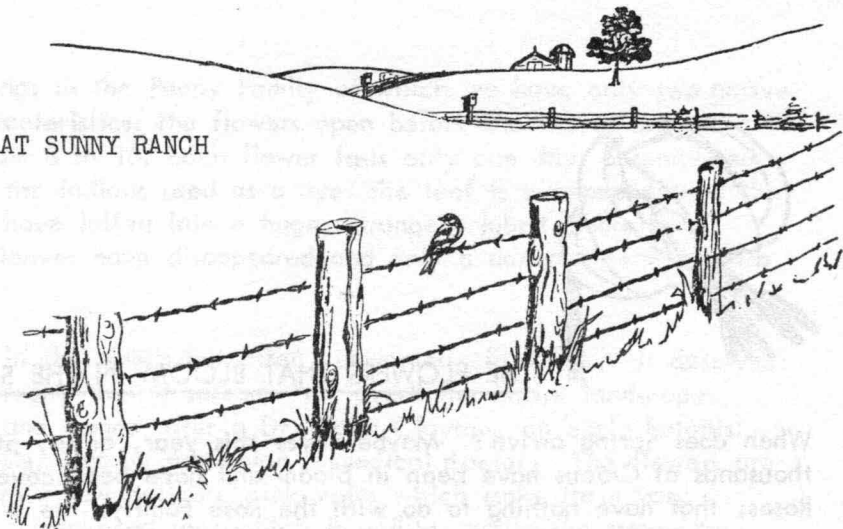
Proposed Revision: The officers of the Society shall be a President, a Vice-President, a Secretary and a Treasurer. They shall be elected at the annual meeting of members and shall hold office for two years. An officer shall be eligible, if elected, to succeed himself in that office for one (and only one) additional two-year term. In case an officer is unable to serve his full term, the Board of Directors may fill the vacancy until the expiration of the term.

Section 5. Present version: The Secretary shall keep a record of all the proceedings of the Society and of the Board of Directors. He shall send notices of all meetings, conduct and preserve all correspondence relating to the Society and perform such other duties as the Board may direct.

Proposed Revision: The Secretary shall keep a record of all the proceedings of the Society and of the Board of Directors, send notices of all Board meetings, and perform such other duties as the Board may direct.

JUNE NATURE OUTING AND WORKSHOPS AT SUNNY RANCH
SUNDAY, JUNE 1.

Once again members and guests of the St. Louis Audubon Society will be privileged to enjoy the hospitality of Burrell and Ruby Pickering at Sunny Ranch near Foristell, Mo. On Sunday, June 1, we have all been invited to spend the day with the Pickerings. Plan to arrive after 9:30.



Activities will be geared to both novice and expert alike, and will be conducted by experienced naturalists in the form of nature workshops. These will be in the fields of birds, insects, pond life, wildflowers, mushrooms, trees and geology. For your convenience the Pickerings will erect signs identifying the name of the leader and the area in which each workshop will be held.

In addition to the workshop sessions, hikes of varying length can be made over the well-marked trails maintained by the Pickerings. The Nature Museum with its fine collection of birds, mammals and nature lore will be open.

This will be a very special day, so bring your family, friends, field guides and food, and join in the all-day fun and learning experience.

DIRECTIONS: West on I-70 to the Foristell Exit, a distance of about 32 miles west of Lindbergh. Turn left and head south on Highway T for 5 miles to Highway M. Turn right on M and proceed for 1-1/2 miles to Highway O. Turn left on O and drive another 2 miles to the Sunny Ranch gate, which is painted red and is marked with a sign on a pole. Enter and drive 1/2 mile to the Pickering home.

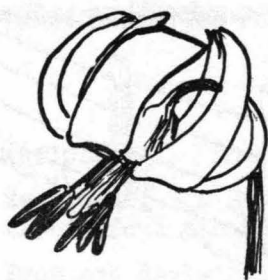


The Missouri Chapter of Nature Conservancy has borrowed money to enable them to preserve two additional outstanding sites.

The 40 acre unnamed Carl Tract, a native tall grass prairie in Lawrence County, is one of the most beautiful in the State. This area which has been a hay meadow as far as records can be traced back to 1836 is known for its abundance of wild flowers.

The second is a 15 acre addition to Lichen Glade in St. Clair County. This preserve will be known as Dean's Acres since a portion of the purchase price came from memorials to the late A. Dean Cole, an active member of the Missouri Audubon Society. An unusual variety of brightly colored lichens cover the sandstone outcroppings which form the glade and bluff.

Tax-deductible contributions to repay the more than \$25,000 which was borrowed to make these purchases are being solicited and may be sent to - Missouri Chapter of Nature Conservancy, 1015 Locust Street, #425, St. Louis, Missouri 63101.



THE FLOWERS THAT BLOOM IN THE SPRING, TRA-LA

When does Spring arrive? Maybe never this year, or so, at least, it looks. In the garden thousands of Crocus have been in bloom and have been covered by snow. So have the Christmas Roses, that have nothing to do with the Rose Family, the Witch Hazel shrubs, and the Winter Aconites, which look so much like Buttercups. In going through my wildflower slide collection I count well over 100 flowering plants which, in normal years, can be found before the middle of April, and as it is impossible to talk about all of them, I shall talk about a few.

The Harbinger of Spring (*Erigenia bulbosa*) is the earliest charmer whose white, little flowers push through the fallen leaves. It is a member of the Parsley Family from which we receive so many condiments and thus the flowers are carried in a loose umbrella shape. Another most descriptive name is Pepper and Salt, as the red-brown anthers contrast with the white petals. You find it on south-facing hillsides with rich soil, usually on the lower portions.

But the reputation of the Harbinger of Spring gets some competition at times. It comes from a large clan, the Mustard Family. Missouri has 69 species, of which over one-half are immigrants, mostly from Europe. As a wildflower family, they have a kind of Pariah reputation . . . they are mostly weeds. As cultivated plants, they are of utmost importance and provide us with cabbage, broccoli, mustard, radishes. Those immigrants, being used to the cold climate of Northern Europe can surprise us with individual flowers almost any time in very early Spring. One of these "premature" bloomers, named Sibara, was flowering in early March this year. Others, like the well-known Shepard's Purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) will be seen after a few warm days. It gets its name from the heart-shaped seedpods which form while the upper part of the flowering stem is still in bloom.

Another "weed" — everybody is entitled to his or her own definition of what a weed is — which is flowering now, even in this prolonged winter, is the Dead Nettle, a horrible name for *Lamium purpureum*. It is NOT a nettle and it certainly is NOT dead, but spreads with a most lively urge over fields and gardens. It has square stems as behooves a member of the Mint family, but, unfortunately it lacks the aromatic, pleasant scents which we expect from most mints. The wrinkled leaves are often purplish, and the flowers which arise from leaf axils are pink.

Those few who really search for flowers may have seen a tiny sky-blue flower which I saw open on a rare clear day in early March of this year. It is a Speedwell (*Veronica polita*), and grows in small cushions, often with chickweed in neglected lawns and waste places. We have few true blue flowers, and this gnome will delight you if you take a close look. This too is an immigrant from Europe.

But, I must shed this hang-up with weeds. Soon, there will be a wealth of showy natives in their Spring glory. Many of them are dwellers of the woods, and there is a good reason that they must flower early, before the leaf canopy robs them of light. There are very few flowering plants which are adapted to the deep shade of Summer forests.

Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) belongs to the Poppy Family of which we have only two native members. It has a number of odd characteristics: the flowers open before the leaves are developed; the snow-white petals vary from 8 to 16; each flower lasts only one day; a senna-red juice is contained in the roots, which the Indians used as a dye; the leaf is wrapped around the flower stem and opens after the petals have fallen into a huge, strangely lobed umbrella of bluish-green color. By late June the leaves have disappeared and only a dormant corm remains underground.

Spring Beauty is everywhere, not only in the woods but often, unwanted, in lawns. It deserves the attribute Catholic — meaning in Greek, that it spreads "all over" the entire landscape. Botanically, it is *Claytonia virginica*, and named after a Dr. John Clayton, an early botanist of this country, who, like other botanists, was by profession a medical doctor. The flowers are white, sometimes pink. The petals have a few delicate pink veins which make them very attractive. The root stock is a corm, a thickened root which is edible, while the strap-like leaves can be cooked. The Indians used this plant as food. The present craze of eating wild plants will, hopefully, spare the Spring Beauties, growing in our woods, and eliminate a few which grow in lawns instead.

Let me close with a few remarks about violets. We are richly endowed with species of this family — all bloom in Spring. The strangest member, the Green Violet (*Hybanthus concolor*) looks in no way like a Violet as we normal humans would conceive one. But the classifying botanists, the taxonomists, insist that this up to 2½ foot tall plant with many large, elliptical leaves and minute green flowers hanging from the leaf axils IS a violet. It is common, but only of interest to the botanically inclined.

Twelve other Violets are either violet, blue, white, or yellow. There are two white Violets. One of them is very rare and a remnant plant from the ice ages, this is *V. pallens*, which grows only in a few spots in Ste. Genevieve County. The other, *V. striata*, is common, at least in the Ozarks. It forms showy clumps under favorable conditions. The only yellow Violet in Missouri is *V. pensylvanica* — sorry, it IS spelled with only one "n." This early bloomer gets to be quite straggly as the season advances.

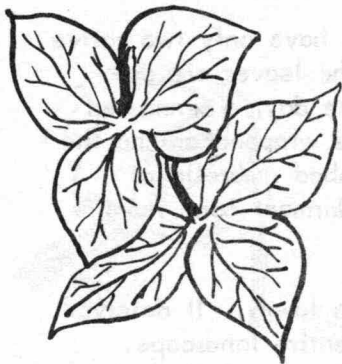
Truly "different" are two Violets, which everybody should know. First *Viola pedata*, named beautifully by the Ozark dwellers the Pansy Violet. It grows, where the soil seems to be absent, where rocks abound, and often, where man has disturbed the land. Glorious, large flowers, either a combination of purple and blue petals or all petals blue arise on short stems. The leaves are deeply dissected like a bird's foot, thus the name. The other unusual dwarf Violet is the Johnny-jump-up (*V. rafinesquii*). It is at home wherever fields are fallow, along roadsides and the borders of woods. The color can be a very pale violet or almost white, but in the acid soils of our St. Francois hills the shades of color become strong violet.

That leaves seven species with blue or violet colors. The most common is the very hairy *V. sororia*, the wooly blue violet. Others can be identified only by the shape of the leaves, and, let us be honest, this identification is not always easy for the so-called experts.

May I close by paraphrasing the German student song "Enjoy Life While the Lamp is Still Glowing" by saying, go see the Spring flowers while gasoline is still available. It won't be too long!

Edgar Denison





WILDFLOWERS OF EASTERN AMERICA

by

John E. Klimas and James A. Cunningham

It is interesting to find under one cover both a wildflower guide and a book about wildflowers. WILDFLOWERS OF EASTERN AMERICA has over 300 extraordinary color photographs which are selected to show the beauty of the individual flower, its habitat and leaf shape. An outstanding feature is a special identification system based on color, season and general appearance. This book is a great boon for the professional as well as the amateur.

An added value is a separate section on plants you can eat, or use for medicine, interesting recipes — Cattail Stalk Soup, Oxalis Lemonade and Pokeberry Jelly, just to name a few. This is a fine book for your library or a gift to a special friend.

C.L.H.

WILDFLOWERS OF WESTERN AMERICA

by

Dr. Robert T. Orr and Margaret C. Orr

Dr. Orr, who is Associate Director of the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco and head of the Department of Birds and Mammals and his wife, Margaret, have written the companion volume to "Wildflowers of Eastern America." The same special identification system is used, and WILDFLOWERS OF WESTERN AMERICA includes the important wild flowering species commonly found in the western states. Both the text and the photographs are outstanding.

C.L.H.

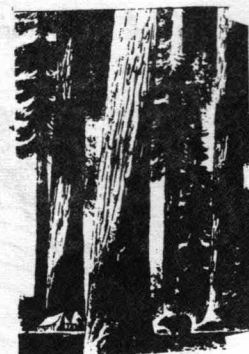
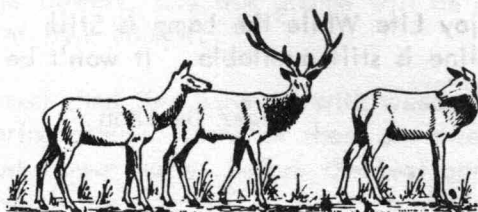
THE NEAR WOODS

by

Millard C. Davis

Whether you plan a long summer of travel or just patio resting be sure to include this informative book. For anyone who has ever looked at a stand of trees, trod a woodland path or idled along a streambed, here is a fine guide to the woodlands. THE NEAR WOODS is a reading experience that stirs the mind with a fresh awareness of the staggering abundance of nature.

C.L.H.



Recommendations of the St. Louis Audubon Society Nominating Committee which will be presented for approval at the annual membership meeting in May, 1975. According to the by-laws, all officers are elected for one-year terms, directors for terms as stated below.

President - Martin Schweig, Jr.
1st Vice President - Edward P. Ortleb
2nd Vice President - Paul Bauer
3rd Vice President - Mrs. Earl Hath
Secretary - Mrs. Edwin P. Stuessie
Treasurer - Jay G. Rice

Directors -

1 yr. (term expires 1976) - Mrs. Gerome Chambers
Leo Drey
J. Marshall Magnier

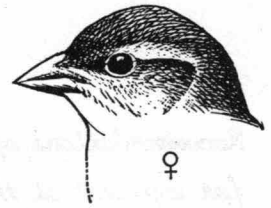
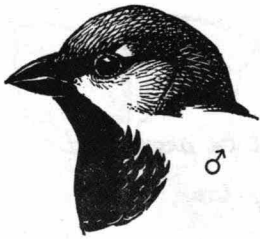
2 yr. (term expires 1977) - Thomas A. Brooks

3 yr. (term expires 1978) - Richard Anderson
Claire Condon (Mrs. Chris Condon)
Debbie Day (Mrs. Joseph Smentowski)
Harold Flowers
Scott Johnson
Edward P. Mason
Nancy Speed
Claudia Spener (Mrs. Richard Spener)

Respectfully submitted: Nominating Committee, St. Louis Audubon Society

Kyrle Boldt
Mary Wiese (Mrs. William Wiese)
Elizabeth Golterman, Chairman

March 30, 1975



FIELD STUDY OF BEHAVIOR OF WILD URBAN BIRDS IN WINTER AND SPRING

—J. Mulligan—

There is a lot of interesting behavior going on outside the window, even in the brick and asphalt jungle of the inner city, and major aspects of behavior studies can be pursued here: comparative studies, displays, motivation changes, maintenance, feeding, fighting, breeding, predation, territoriality, and so on. There are more species, doing more things than even the pros generally realize, and a good project is to gain skill in identification, observation, recording, and interpretation of local bird activities.

Behavior studies involve ability to identify species common around town, with some details about where they can be seen and how they make a living. E.g., house sparrow, cardinal, blue jay, starling, mockingbird, robin, woodpecker, blackbird, junco, kestrel (sparrow hawk), pigeon, song sparrow, purple martin (April). A mammal, the squirrel, could be added . . .

A good approach is to become thoroughly acquainted by observation with one species, and taking field notes to determine the following:

- Daily routine . . . roosting, waking up, feeding, maintenance, resting . . .
- Social structure . . . flocks, pairs, communes, or colonies
- Modes of communication . . . visual and auditory displays
- Territoriality
- Evidence of breeding behavior and the onset of breeding . . . courting, nesting

For many, one of the easiest species to study is the House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*). (Ref.: D. Summers-Smith, 1963. The House Sparrow. Collins, London.)

The primitive origin of this kind of bird is Africa, and it is a member of the Weaver finches, which are common there, where they breed in large colonies and weave elaborate domed nests and don't sing much. The genus "Passer," however, is mainly found in Europe and Asia, where the House Sparrow in most of this range, but not all, is a commensal of man, around cities and towns. It has been introduced from there on most continents, very successfully in most cases. The American "Sparrow" group is quite different (though they look alike) in nearly all features of behavior: sociality, displays, territory, colonialism. . .

The daily routine and annual cycle of the House Sparrow are distinctive. They never seem pressed for food or time, they are very faithful to their nesting or roosting sites and some can be found there at least roosting every day of the year. They pair early, are monogamous, apparently permanently paired, defend small territories around the nest site, but have frequent display parties near the ground with lots of loud cheeping, when everybody gets in the act. This is initiated apparently by a single male courting and displaying to his mate. The whole affair is unique in birds of this hemisphere.

In the fall, after moulting, they flock and wander a mile or two away. By October-November they've returned and the young pick a roosting (later nesting) site, and the males fight, call, and pair up either now or during January-February. Then the calling (singing) gets serious if non-mated. Nest building goes on all the time, but is finished for breeding in April, at the end of which the first young hatch. There are three to four broods; the male cares for the fledglings. They feed on seeds, insects (especially for nestlings), bread, scraps, etc. Around old buildings there are many good sites for roosting-nesting. Descriptions of these sites and their locations on the buildings are of interest.

Visual and Vocal Displays of the House Sparrow (Typical of Many Bird Species)

In the following, display posturing and calls are described separately, but this is an artificial separation, because they are often simultaneous. (Is this a case of redundant signal information, same information either mode?)

I. VISUAL

Tail Flicking.—Frequent, appears to be downward, short sharp; seen in nervous bird like a nest owner as you approach, or a strange male investigating a nest site, or some like disturbance.

Sleeking Plumage.—All the feathers are flattened against the body; normally round head appears flat. A sign of arousal, disturbance, fear, upset.

Tail Raising.—A pre-flight intention movement, associated with arousal and fear, as above.

Head Forward.—Body and tail are horizontal, beak aimed, wings also raised if arousal is high, also beak open. This is an intention movement for attack, and is a ritualized threat signal. Note puffing and associated display of wing bars, throat and facial markings, enlarged size, tail elevation, etc., especially in the male.

. . . If the feathers are sleeked rather than puffed in this posture, some ambivalence is indicated. A female near the nest may give Head Forward, Bill Gape, with wings in and feathers sleeked; she's fearful, signalling threat. Stance and foot movement contribute to the signal (plus vocalizations). Interpretation of all this becomes easy when actual attack or flight follows. In these birds actual fighting is mainly pecking with the bill (larger birds use wings and/or feet effectively also); they may flutter up breast to breast, and they attempt to overturn the other; such encounters are usually brief. Lunging, gaping, wing flicking, and tail raising are all part of this and are often intermediate between fully functional movements and ritualized signals.

Sollicitation by the female . . . crouching, neck in, wings spread and shivering, and perhaps tail spread a bit. This is an invitation to copulation; when this ensues the head is raised (head feathers are grasped by the drake in ducks) and copulation is followed by an arching of back and tail in many species. Note the wing shivering in the female. This with open beak, and the beginnings of the Sollicitation posture are an invitation signal for Courtship Feeding by the male. This posture is the same as used by young fledglings just off the nest.

Strutting or "Standing to Attention" in the male: head up, chest out, tail up, fanned, wing out a bit but also down touching the ground. The male hops around in front of the female and may bow stiffly up and down. He does not face directly toward her nor flick wing (this would be a signal of aggression).

Sparrow Party - Sudden boisterous storm of chirruping and hopping around and flight into a tree or shrub; may be associated with a posturing pair. Mostly males are involved.

Bill Wiping - occurs more often out of than in a feeding context.

II AUDITORY

Chirrup.-Chirp, cheep, chip, cheerup...many variations, circumstances vary, proclaims identity. Chee, Chee, Pee, Dee - Appeasement calls during breeding. Churr during breeding, precedes solicitation posturing, or against nest intruders. Nasal Quer - Alarm, ambivalent situations. Shrill Cheer - Fear, extreme alarm.



St. Louis Area Birding-January, February 1975
J. Earl Comfort

The exciting and interesting birding during the first two months of the year gave us 112 species, including such rare species (in the AOU order) greater scaup and oldsquaw ducks, glaucous, Iceland and Bonapart's gulls, black-legged kittiwake, golden eagle, black-billed magpie and fish crow. Some unusuals for the season were pied-billed grebe, double-crested cormorant, great blue heron, turkey vulture, American coot, killdeer, woodcock, common snipe, brown thrasher, catbird, hermit thrush, myrtle warbler and western meadowlark. Rarest species by far was the black-billed magpie identified at the Busch Wildlife Area in St. Charles County by Kyrle Boldt on January 17.

The black-billed magpie, a spectacular bird wherever found, is a member of the family that includes crows, ravens, jays and nut crackers. Most of the members of this tribe prefer areas considerably west of St. Louis. This leaves us only the crows and jays as regular area representatives. Discounting crows and ravens, all members of this big clan are dressed in splendor and all are quite vociferous. The magpies are good examples of splendid coloration.

The magpie was discovered in the company of a flock of Brewer's blackbirds, which would ordinarily be an outstanding find in this season. The magpie, far out of its western range, is a modern first area record. It measures 20 inches, much of the length being contributed to its extremely long tail. This black, white and green bird has a cousin in the far west that is identified by its yellow bill in contrast to this black-billed bird. The composite list of the two local Christmas Counts was 85 species. The St. Louis Audubon count was made in the Orchard Farm area in St. Charles County and the Webster Groves Nature Study Society count covered the August A. Busch Wildlife area.

ONE DAY BALD EAGLE COUNT – February 8, 1975

Again, most of the Mississippi River was covered from its source to below St. Louis and then into Kentucky. The Wisconsin River was covered by Terry Ingram and party. The Illinois River was covered from Ottawa to Grafton. This river was handled by Dr. L. H. Princer. The area of the Mississippi from Bellevue to Warsaw, Iowa was again covered by cars and a plane. Dr. Hayden DeDecker flew the plane with Peter Petersen doing the counting. The St. Louis Audubon Society had the most people counting. Lockmasters, Fish & Wildlife and Game Management, Bird Clubs and others took part. Thanks to all.

LOCATION	ADULTS	IMMATURES	NOT AGED	TOTAL
Lock & Dam 3 thru Lock & Dam 11	213	43	2	255
Lock & Dam 12 to Lock & Dam 22	270	74	2	346
From Lock 17 & Dam 22 to below St. Louis	73	35	16	124
Illinois River	146	124	14	284
River Totals	702	276	34	1012
River percentages	71.8%	28.2%		
Illinois Wildlife Refuges	30	41	0	71
Kentucky	19	29	0	48
Totals	751	346	34	1131
Percentages	68.46%	31.54%		
Golden Eagles				
Illinois Refuges	1	6	0	7
Kentucky	1	1	0	2
Tennessee	0	0	7	7
Totals	2	7	7	16

For the period 1966 thru 1966 an average of 601 eagles were found – percentage 80 to 20%.

For the period 1967 thru 1971 an average of 745 eagles were found – percentage 72 to 28%.

For the period 1972 thru 1975 an average of 1028 eagles were found – percentage 70.5 to 29.5%.

Missouri	18	6	0	24 (3 reports)
Tennessee	80	65	22	167 (complete state)
Totals	98	71	22	191
Percentage	58%	42%		

Comment: The weather was very bad from Lock & Dam 11 south. The Illinois River had freezing and blustery weather. A few parties were unable to be out. However, the rivers were nearly completely covered. On the Illinois River the area from Grafton to Kampsville upstream for about 35 miles had a large concentration of eagles. See report of 1972 count. There were 126 adults, 124 immatures and 14 not aged. This area is close to the Mississippi. There is a strong possibility that some of these eagles might of come from some waterfowl refuge. Squaw Creek National Wildlife Refuge had eagles dropping from 54 adults and 92 immatures on December 7 to 4 adults and 26 immatures on January 7 to 2 adults only on the count date. Weather prevented a count in Nebraska with only one eagle on the count date. A count was made on February 22 from Grand Island to Kearney and 18 adults and 5 immatures were found. This count was made by the Nebraska Ornithologist's Union. The Kentucky count was by the Kentucky Ornithological Society. The Tennessee count was the the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the TOS, the Fish & Wildlife Service and by the Sierra Club. The Columbia Audubon Society found 20 of the Missouri eagles.

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ARKANSAS					
0401	Pulaski County A.	332	4	12	3.6
0402	Greers Ferry A.S.	59	1	1	1.7
KANSAS					
1702	Topeka A.S.	293	2	10	3.4
1703	Wichita A. S.	394		11	2.8
1704	Jayhawk A.S.	175	2	5	2.9
1705	McPherson County A.S.	32		2	6.3
1706	N. Flint Hills A.S.	155	2	7	4.5
1707	Sand Hills A.S.	70	1	2	2.9
1708	Smoky Hills A.S.	86		5	5.8
MISSOURI					
2601	Columbia A.S.	349	16	19	5.4
2602	St. Louis A.S.	1725	37	85	4.9
2603	Burroughs A.S.	956	15	41	4.3
2604	Bootheel A.S.	32		1	3.1
NEBRASKA					
2801	Prairie A.S.	49	5	5	10.2
2802	La Grande Isle A.S.	60	1	1	1.7
2803	Big Bend A.S.	65	1	1	1.5
2804	Omaha A.S.	454	14	30	6.6
2805	Wachiska A.S.	76	1	2	2.6
OKLAHOMA					
3701	Washita Valley A. S.	53	1	1	1.9
3702	Tulsa A. S.	154	10	18	11.7



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